

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4551

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 13859

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TAGS: PARM, US

SUBJECT: STATEMENTS ON INDIA'S NUCLEAR POLICY

REF: A. STATE 226572 B. NEW DELHI 13860

THE STATESMAN ACCOUNT OF THE OCTOBER 14 MEETING OF THE
PARLIAMENTARY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE ATTACHED TO THE
ATOMIC ENERGY AND SPACE DEPARTMENTS FOLLOWS:

QUOTE: NEW DELHI MONDAY. WITHOUT RULING OUT THE POS-
SIBILITY OF AN UNDERGROUND THERMONUCLEAR EXPLOSION BY
INDIA, GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN MADE IT CLEAR HERE TODAY THAT
A DECISION WOULD BE TAKEN ONLY AFTER THE RESULTS OF THE
NUCLEAR EXPLOSION IN RAJASTHAN HAD BEEN THOROUGHLY ASSESSED.

THE EXPLOSION TECHNIQUE USED IN THE RAJASTHAN EXPERI-
MENT COULD BE USED FOR TRIGGERING A THERMONUCLEAR DEVICE
THE ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION SAID. THE COST PER KILOTON
OF A THERMONUCLEAR DEVICE WAS MUCH LESS THAN THAT OF A
FISSION DEVICE AND THE THERMONUCLEAR EXPLOSION WOULD BE
CHEAPER FOR HEAVY EARTH MOVING OPERATION.

THIS WAS STATED AT TODAY'S MEETING OF THE PARLIA-
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MENTAY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE ATTACHED TO THE ATOMIC

ENERGY AND SPACE DEPARTMENTS. MEMBERS WHO ASKED WHETHER A THERMONUCLEAR EXPLOSION WAS IN THE OFFING WERE TOLD THAT THE "FUTURE PROGRAMME FOR CARRYING OUT PEACEFUL NUCLEAR EXPERIMENTS CAN BE CONSIDERED ONLY AFTER THE RESULTS OF THE MAY 18 EXPERIMENT ARE AVAILABLE AND AFTER ALL THE CRITERIA FOR CARRYING OUT SUCH AN EXPERIMENT ARE FULLY SATISFIED."

THE TWO MAIN SPOKESMEN FOR THE GOVERNMENT, THE UNION MINISTER OF STATE FOR ENERGY, MR. K.C. PANT, AND DR. H.N. SETHNA, CHAIRMAN OF THE ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION, ARE REPORTED TO HAVE DECLINED COMMENT ON DR. KISSINGER'S RECENT STATEMENT JUSTIFYING PEACEFUL NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS BY NUCLEAR WEAPONS STATES AND CRITICIZING SIMILAR EXPERIMENTS BY NON-NUCLEAR WEAPONS COUNTRIES.

DURING THE DISCUSSION, DR. SETHNA SAID: " A NUCLEAR EXPLOSION OR EXPLOSIONS DID NOT MAKE A WEAPONS SYSTEM WHERE- AS A WEAPONS SYSTEM COULD NOT BE KEPT UP TO DATE WITHOUT PERIODIC TESTS."

A MEMBER, MR. KRISHAN KANT, REPORTEDLY SAID THAT IF DR. KISSINGER'S OPINION THAT ONLY TEST EXPLOSIONS BY THOSE WHO ALREADY HAD THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS COULD BE CATEGORIZED AS PEACEFUL OR NON-PEACEFUL WAS TO BE ACCEPTED, THEN INDIA SHOULD GO AHEAD WITH ITS EXPERIMENTS.

MR. PANT TOLD THE MEMBER THAT THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS POWERS, ESPECIALLY THE SUPER POWERS, SEEMED TO HAVE "A CLOSED VIEW" OF THE QUESTION. THEY REFUSED TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE DISCRIMINATORY CHARACTER OF THE NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY.

ON THE QUESTION OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SABOTAGE, PILFERAGE AND THEFT OF NUCLEAR MATERIALS, IT WAS STATED THAT SINCE MARCH 1974, THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY HAD SET UP A CENTRAL SECURITY CELL WHICH " IS CONTINUOUSLY EXAMINING VARIOUS ASPECTS OF SABOTAGE, AND THEFT BY ENEMY AGENTS, ANTI-NATIONAL AND ANTI-SOCIAL ELEMENTS" OF FISSILE MATERIAL, INCLUDING PLUTONIUM."

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ACCORDING TO THE PAPERS SUBMITTED TO THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE, THE BHABHA ATOMIC RESEARCH CENTRE (BARC) HAS A PROGRAMME FOR DEVELOPING LASERS SUITABLE FOR EXPERIMENTS ON LASER INDUCED "FUSION FISSION" POWER GENERATION.

BARC WAS NOT FAR BEHIND OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE

DEVELOPMENT OF THESE LASERS.

THE ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION HAS SAID THAT BARC IS "SHORTLY UNDERTAKING A PROGRAMME TO LOOK INTO NEW LASER SYSTEMS WHICH MAY PROVE MORE PROMISING" THAN THOSE AVAILABLE TODAY. ACCORDING TO AEC, THE LASERS EXISTING TODAY IN THE USA, THE SOVIET UNION AND FRANCE WILL NOT BE SUITABLE FOR PRODUCING POWER ECONOMICALLY IN A LASER-INDUCED FUSION-FISSION SCHEME.

AEC HAS DENIED THAT THE RECENT EXPERIENCE AT TARAPUR ATOMIC POWER STATION HAD REVEALED BASIC FAULTS IN THE DESIGN OF THE STATION AND ITS KEY COMPONENTS.

SOME DESIGN MODIFICATIONS TO THE STATION HAD BECOME NECESSARY IN THE LIGHT OF FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN THE BOILING WATER REACTOR TECHNOLOGY, BUT AEC SAID THIS DID NOT MEAN THAT THE EARLIER DESIGN HAD "BASIC FAULTS."

THE STATION HAD LOST AN ESTIMATED 100 MILLION UNITS OF OUTPUT DUE TO POWER GRID-RELATED FAULTS IN SEPTEMBER ALONE. THE OUTPUT HAD BEEN AFFECTED PRIMARILY BY THE INITIAL FUEL BUNDLES FABRICATED BY USING AN EARLIER TECHNOLOGY AND SUPPLIED BY THE GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY, AEC SAID.

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THE FUEL ASSEMBLIES, RECENTLY RECEIVED FROM ABROAD AND THOSE MADE AT THE NUCLEAR FUEL COMPLEX IN HYDERABAD, WHICH HAD BEEN LOADED INTO THE REACTOR OF UNIT II WERE BASED ON IMPROVED TECHNOLOGY "WITH THE RESULT THAT THIS UNIT IS CURRENTLY OPERATING AT NEARLY FULL OUTPUT." END QUOTE
A RELATED HINDUSTAN TIMES REPORT ADDED:

QUOTE: NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14 - ENERGY MINISTER K.C. PANT SAID TODAY TO THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENT THAT THE ATOMIC ENERGY DEPARTMENT HAD TO CONDUCT MORE UNDERGROUND EXPLOSIONS TO DEVELOP NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES, BUT THE NEXT EXPLOSION WOULD HAVE TO WAIT STUDY OF ALL THE DATA AVAILABLE FROM THE FIRST EXPERIMENT.

HE SAID THE DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT UNDERGROUND NUCLEAR EXPLOSION HAVE BEEN LEFT "ENTIRELY " TO THE SCIENTISTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY. END QUOTE.

UNI ON OCTOBER 16 REPORTED:

QUOTE: BANGALORE, OCT 16 (UNI) UNION MINISTER OF STATE FOR ENERGY K.C. PANT SAID HERE TODAY THAT INDIA SHOULD GO IN FOR FURTHER NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS IF IT THOUGH THEY WERE NECES-
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SARY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNOLOGY FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES. THE TOUCHSTONE SHOULD BE OUR OWN INTEREST, HE TOLD A NEWS CONFERENCE. WHEN ASKED TO CLARIFY HIS STATEMENT AT THE MEETING OF THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENT ON ATOMIC ENERGY TWO DAYS AGO IN DELHI, HE SAID HE WOULD NOT LIKE TO COMMENT ON THE REPORTED STATEMENT OF U S SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY KISSINGER, DIFFERENTIATING PEACEFUL EXPLOSIONS BY NUCLEAR WEAPON STATES AND NON-NUCLEAR WEAPON STATES AS HE HAD NOT SEEN THAT STATEMENT. MR. PANT, HOWEVER, SAID THAT ANY SUGGESTION THAT PEACEFUL EXPLOSION SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT ONLY BY A NUCLEAR WEAPON STATE AND NOT BY A NON-NUCLEAR WEAPON STATE STRIKES ME AS BEING VERY ODD.

HE SAID WHAT IT WOULD AMOUNT TO WAS THAT IF A STATE DID NOT NOT WANT TO GO IN FOR NUCLEAR WEAPONS, THEN IT COULD NOT ALSO GO IN FOR PEACEFUL EXPLOSION. THIS MEANT THAT A STATE, WHICH DID NOT NOT WANT TO PRODUCE NUCLEAR WEAPONS, WOULD HAVE TO GO IN FOR THEM IN ORDER TO HAVE PEACEFUL EXPLOSIONS, HE ADDED.

THE WHOLE ATTITUDE STEMS FROM THE THINKING BEHIND THE NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY (NNPT) WHICH ALLOWED NUCLEAR WEAPONS, BUT PREVENTS OTHER STATES, FROM EVEN GOING IN FOR PEACEFUL EXPLOSIONS. INDIA CON-

SIDERED THE TREATY AS DISCRIMINATORY AND THEREFORE HAD
NOT SIGNED IT.

HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER THE MATTER
FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF NATIONAL INTEREST, HE SAID.
UNI. END QUOTE.MOYNIHAN

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